



PARAMOUNT RANCH



merican Cinema plays a starring role in the cultural life of the United States and the world. Since before the advent of “talking pictures,” Paramount Ranch has served as a setting for hundreds of cinematic productions.

Lights! Camera! Action!...In 1927, Paramount Pictures purchased 2,400 acres of the old Rancho Las Virgenes for use as a “movie ranch.” For 25 years, a veritable who’s who of Hollywood practiced their craft at Paramount Ranch including director Cecil B. DeMille and actors Bob Hope, Gary Cooper and Claudette Colbert. The diverse landscape was the real star of the show. It offered film makers the freedom to create distant locales such as colonial Massachusetts in *The Maid of Salem*, ancient China in *The Adventures of Marco Polo*, a South Seas island in *Ebb Tide* (1937) and numerous western locations including San Francisco in *Wells Fargo*. The art of illusion was mastered on the landscape.

Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch...The golden era of movie making at Paramount Ranch came to an end when changes to the studio system prompted Paramount Pictures to sell the ranch. Paramount Ranch found renewed life as a film location when William Hertz bought the southeast portion in 1953. An ardent fan of movie westerns, he built a permanent western town utilizing Paramount Pictures’ old prop storage sheds. As a result, television companies began producing westerns at the ranch such as *The Cisco Kid* and *Dick Powell’s Zane Grey Theatre*. William Hertz sold the property in 1955. The Paramount Racetrack opened a year later, and some considered it one of the most challenging in the U.S. Although it closed a year later, after several fatal accidents, the racetrack was featured in *The Devil’s Hairpin*, filmed in 1957. Most of the track still winds through the grasslands of the park.

Ride Off Into the Sunset...From 1957 to 1980, the ranch changed ownership several times, but filmmaking continued. After purchasing the property in 1980, the National Park Service revitalized the old movie ranch. From 1991 to 1998, Paramount Ranch was used as the setting for the television show, *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman*. Whether watching filming or exploring the area, experience the drama and grandeur of the Santa Monica Mountains.



National Park Service
Santa Monica Mountains
National Recreation Area
401 West Hillcrest Drive
Thousand Oaks CA 91360
www.nps.gov/samo

Visitor Center 805-370-2301
In emergency: dial 911

Information & Safety

Water from streams is not safe to drink due to possible contamination or the presence of the giardia protozoan.

Natural and historic features are protected by law and may not be collected.

Dogs on leash are allowed on designated trails, access roads and developed areas.

Fire is a constant danger. Campfires are prohibited. Smoking is not permitted during times of high fire danger.

Bicyclists must ride courteously and yield to hikers and horseback riders. **Hikers** must yield to horseback riders. The lawn areas are closed to bicycle and horse traffic.

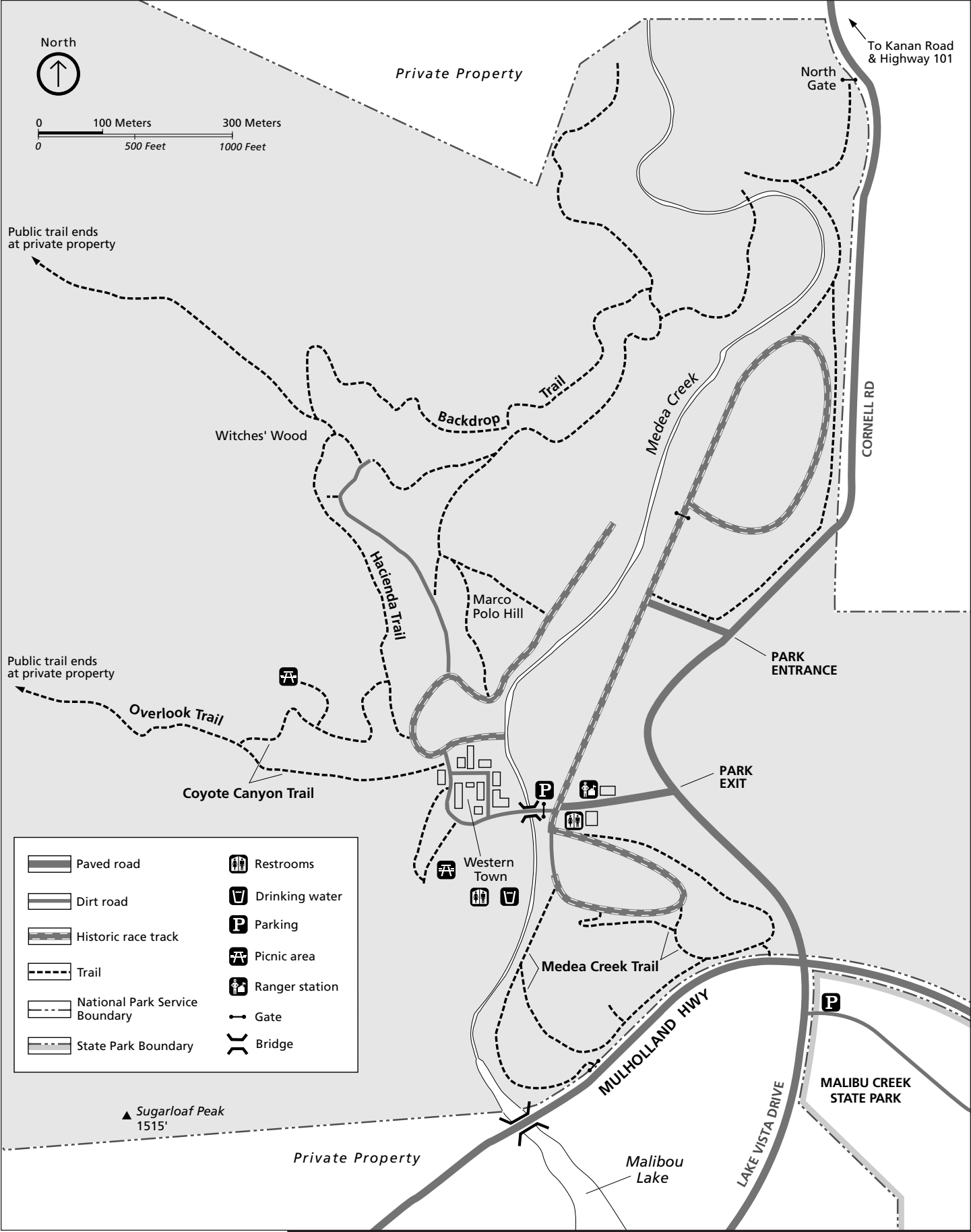
Trail closures will be in effect during and following significant rainfall to protect park resources. Trails will be re-opened when dry enough to sustain public use.

Stay on established trails and avoid rattlesnakes, ticks and poison oak.

Wasps and bees are plentiful during the summer months. Please cover foods and sweet beverages while picnicking.

Firearms are not allowed in National Park Service areas.

Vehicles are restricted to designated roads and parking areas.



Trails

Coyote Canyon Trail 0.5 mile round trip, easy; no bikes—From the west side of the Western Town, the trail follows a small chaparral-covered canyon and climbs a small knoll overlooking the valley. A short spur trail will take you to a picnic spot with a view.

Medea Creek Trail 0.75 mile round trip, easy; no bikes—Begins at the southern end of the parking area. The trail loops through streamside and oak woodland habitats.

Overlook Trail 0.5 mile one way, moderate; no bikes—The trail climbs up from Coyote Canyon to a view of the mountains.

Bits of History

At Paramount Ranch, the National Park Service maintains a connection between past movie productions and place names. **Marco Polo Hill** is named for the set built there circa 1936. The **Hacienda Trail** leads past the sites where Paramount built a Hacienda set in the late 1920's, and CBS built a homestead for *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman* in 1995. **Witches Wood** received its name from the fortune tellers who set up booths each year for the Renaissance Pleasure Faire during the 1970's and 1980's. The **Backdrop Trail** recognizes the portion of the ranch that could be used for any type of shot because it had no telephone poles or distinctive features.

Note: Western Town is only a set. Walk carefully on the boardwalks and do not lean or climb on the buildings. Smoking is not allowed on the boardwalks or while traveling on trails.